



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Monday - December 29, 2003

- ***In the West***, another round of stormy weather is moving inland across ***northern California, Oregon***, the ***northern Great Basin***, and the ***interior Northwest***. Precipitation is especially beneficial across ***inland sections of the West***, where long-term drought is contributing to low reservoir levels. Meanwhile, dry weather prevails in ***southern California***, following recent heavy rainfall and scattered mud slides.
- ***On the Plains***, colder air is overspreading ***Montana***, accompanied by beneficial light snow. Meanwhile, slightly cooler air is replacing recent, record-breaking warmth on the ***central and southern Plains***, where late-week highs soared to 70 degrees F as far north as ***Kansas***. Much of the ***Plains'*** winter wheat remains poorly established and exposed to potential weather extremes.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, a line of showers stretches from ***Michigan southwestward into the lower Ohio Valley***, maintaining adequate to locally excessive soil moisture for ***Midwestern*** winter wheat.
- ***In the South***, showers and thunderstorms are moving eastward along a cold front stretching from near the ***Missouri Bootheel to the central Gulf Coast***. The rain is aiding winter grains and cool-season pastures.

Outlook: During the early- to mid-week period, occasional rain will accompany a slow-moving cold front across the ***eastern one-third of the U.S.***, while a high-pressure system will maintain dry conditions on the ***central and southern Plains***. Farther west, a complex Pacific storm system will spawn two distinct areas of low pressure. The first low-pressure system will trigger locally heavy snow in the ***Northwest*** and ***northern and central Rockies***, while the second system will spark heavy rain, high-elevation snow, and gusty winds across the ***Southwest***. By mid-week, light snow will overspread the ***northern Plains***, while high pressure will build across the ***eastern half of the nation***. On New Year's Day, tranquil weather is expected across the ***Midwest, northern half of the Plains***, and much of the ***East***, but stormy weather will return to ***northern California*** and the ***Pacific Northwest***. Elsewhere, the first day of 2004 will feature beneficial rainfall on the ***southern Plains*** and diminishing storminess in the ***Southwest***. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for January 3-7, 2004, calls for below-normal temperatures along the ***Pacific Coast*** and in ***central and northern portions of the Rockies and Plains***, while warmer-than-normal conditions will linger across the ***eastern one-third of the U.S.*** and in the ***Gulf Coast region***. Above-normal precipitation is likely across the majority of the nation, although near- to below-normal precipitation is forecast across the ***Rio Grande Valley*** and parts of ***Florida***.

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Web Site: <http://www.usda.gov/oce/waob/jawf/AgWxHighlights/TODAYSWX.PDF>